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Hyang-Sook Kim

September 2012

## Incoming professor introduces new course in health communication

**Hyang-Sook Kim** (*Communication and Media Studies*) recently joined the St. Norbert faculty with a wealth of experience in health communication research. Here, she answers our questions about her interest in the field and her plans to engage students in the “wonderland of media effects.”

### How did you become interested in communication?

I was deeply fond of films as a teen. I became curious about how stories and messages within films changed people’s thoughts and attitudes. Basically, I am more interested in the effects of communications than in producing them.

### Why did you decide on St. Norbert College?

[Because of] the welcoming climate I experienced during my job interview at St. Norbert. All the faculty, students and staff I met showed me how much they care about the school and how pleasant their lives are because of the family-like orientation. These impressions encouraged me to consider St. Norbert seriously. Fortunately, I received a job offer and it did not take long to make my decision.

### What is your background?

I was born in South Korea and grew up in an average family with my parents and younger sister. I earned my bachelor’s and first master’s degree in mass communications with an emphasis in film and drama at Sogang University in South Korea. I then worked about two years for a film production and online education company in advertising/public relations.

In 2005, I moved to the United States for my second master’s degree in mass communications at Kansas State University and became a media effects researcher, especially in health communication. I earned my Ph.D. this summer at Pennsylvania State University. My dissertation investigated the effects of interface features (i.e., online buddies and bandwagon cues) on users’ attitudes and behaviors in an online health community. I just started a new life in De Pere with my lovely 5-year-old daughter and husband.

### How will your research interests affect what you do at St. Norbert?

My research interests center on the psychological effects of media messages and communication technology on users’ perception and attitudes, particularly in communicating health messages and promoting healthy lifestyles. I see my role as introducing students to the wonderland of media effects and the joy of professional communication research.

### Which classes are you most excited to teach?

I will teach International Mass Communication and Persuasion this fall, which enables me to mix theory and practice. I am also excited to teach

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Persuasion because my research is all about persuasion! I hope students will become more familiar with the research and true value of persuasion in communications.

**What new courses will you offer?**

Health Communication. Students will learn about health communication from numerous viewpoints, ranging from a media to an interpersonal perspective, and the theoretical mechanisms underlying real-world health communication. Communication Research Methods is another course I would like to initiate because it would enlarge the curriculum and enhance students' research qualifications. Psychological Effects of Communication Technology could be another interesting course.

**What new research opportunities will you offer your students?**

Students will be able to participate in research under my supervision for their thesis or as student research assistants in my research projects. Both require students to learn about social scientific research before participating in the research process. I may offer student-research opportunities in classes depending on the college's needs and student wishes.

**How does your scholarship in the field of communication affect your life?**

I no longer passively consume media. I usually watch advertisements analytically. I think, 'What is the purpose of these particular images in this ad? Are these images effective and persuasive? Was the ad on target?'

I do not allow my daughter to be exposed to violent and harmful content. No commercials, of course! She can only watch PBS Kids, Nick Jr. and some Disney.

*You can meet more of our incoming faculty members in the [new faculty directory](#).*

*Sept. 4, 2012*

